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Soviets wary of relaxing scientific controls for 'star wars'

By Bill Gertz
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The Soviet Union fears that competing with the United States in space-based missile defense could unleash a new wave of internal opposition since the research would require relaxing controls over the Soviet scientific community, according to Vladimir Bukovsky, a leading Soviet exile.

Mr. Bukovsky, a doctoral candidate at Stanford University, last week addressed a meeting of the Andrei Sakharov Institute, named after the Soviet physicist who was banished to a remote city in 1980 for his criticism of Soviet policy. Mr. Bukovsky also directs a Paris-based international movement of anti-communist forces called Resistance International.

Before being traded into exile for a Chilean communist party official in 1976, Mr. Bukovsky, 43, spent 11 years in Soviet prisons and prison-psychiatric facilities for speaking out in defense of human rights.

In an interview Mr. Bukovsky also said he believes the Soviet Union will release Mr. Sakharov sometime soon as part of an effort to improve relations with the West.

"I believe that if the Soviets are really seeking improved relations with the West, particularly in light of their poor economic condition, they have to realize that Sakharov's case must be solved," Mr. Bukovsky said. In addition to Mr. Sakharov, he believes the Soviets will release human rights activist Anatoli Scharansky and will loosen restrictions on Jewish emigration.

The subject of Soviet human rights abuses and emigration restrictions is expected to be discussed this week in Moscow during high-level trade talks between a U.S. delegation headed by Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige.

Asked about Soviet opposition to

U.S. space defense research Mr. Bukovsky said the Soviets regard strategic defense as a serious problem because of the expense involved in keeping pace technologically with the United States.

"It is not only expensive — there's another side to it," he said. "If [the Soviets] have to go into full scale development, it will require high technology which the Soviet Union does not have, and they will have to give more academic liberty to the scientific community," Mr. Bukovsky said.

Such free-wheeling activity could possibly lead, he suggested, to greater political activity as well. In addition, it might well result in the promotion of scientists based on "professional merit and not according to their loyalty to the Communist Party," Mr. Bukovsky said.

"And that's what they hate to do because, as the result of similar programs with nuclear weapons, they

ended up with people like Sakharov and [critic and nuclear physicist Pyotr] Kapitsa who they were forced to tolerate," Mr. Bukovsky said.

Mr. Bukovsky believes the Soviets' main purpose in engaging the United States in arms control negotiations is to force a slowdown or postponement of the Strategic Defense Initiative, or 'star wars' missile defense.

"If the Soviets fail to do that, then there is very little ground for any agreement and very little interest in continuing negotiations," he said.

On the subject of Soviet arms control violations, Mr. Bukovsky stated that the Soviets have violated every written agreement they ever signed. He said they believe agreements exist in order to cover secret Soviet programs and to "calm down the opposition."

"They never believed in any written agreements with 'capitalist' countries," Mr. Bukovsky said. "They cite Lenin who said, 'We

deceive and have to deceive capitalist countries under our own morality — proletarian morality.'"

He said the Soviets always use two standards in measuring the value of negotiations with the West. One is how much they can benefit by deceiving the other side and the other is the propaganda value of the negotiations.

On his life in the West, Mr. Bukovsky has written a best-selling book, published in Europe, called "That Piercing Pain of Freedom." The book, as yet unpublished in the United States, criticizes socialist ideas and compares socialism and communism. It suggests that totalitarianism today is a serious threat because its roots lie within individuals.

The book, he said, discusses the question of freedom and totalitarianism.

"The question that is always interesting for us Russians is 'Is there

something wrong with us that we have this system or it is a problem common to all humanity?'" Mr. Bukovsky said.

After pondering the question, Mr. Bukovsky concluded that the threat of societies adopting totalitarianism is "common to the human spirit."

"The possibility of totalitarianism is an ingredient of the human character, and if you ever have the misfortune of having it, you will have it," he said.

The real threat of totalitarianism is not just a Soviet threat, he says, but is an internal threat — "one of the temptations that always exists in the human mind — that's why it's so dangerous."

He called these dual potentials a mixed blessing.

"It's good because it means that one day you will be free; it's bad because it means one day you might become as bad as the communist system," he said.